

# Burying and excavating Winckelmann's *History of Art*

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*This article examines the early responses to Winckelmann's 1764 'History of the Art of Antiquity'. Recently, scholars have become especially interested in the early reception of Winckelmann's work. This discussion makes productive use of that debate, to examine how eighteenth-century translators of Winckelmann set about inventing an image of him as the founding father of classical art history and archaeology. This essay examines how the early French and Italian translations of Winckelmann were introduced by lavish illustrations of Winckelmann's tomb. These translators encouraged their readers to mourn for Winckelmann. The essay examines how these pictures of mourning competed to invent an image of Winckelmann as the exemplary Classical Art Historian, and how these pictures police their mournful invention. The article contributes to thinking about the institutionalisation of classical art history and archaeology as academic disciplines, by considering how 18th-century readers reified the figure of the art historian.*

With the posthumous publication of the second — enlarged — edition of his *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* in 1776, Winckelmann became literally the figurehead of classical art historical studies (Fig. 1). Decorating the title page of part one of his study, ancient head-pieces jostle for place and attention around the central image of the scholar, serene and serious, disembodied, a mental, cerebral abstraction. Title and image elegantly reflect one another: 'Johann Winkelmanns' (sic) is centralized, cushioned, and couched by 'Geschichte der Kunst / des Alterthums', just as Winckelmann's head is wreathed by the history of ancient art around him. The possessive 'Winkelmanns' is telling: he has made the history of ancient art his own. The 1776 editorial explanation for the image elucidates this striking image further: 'Under the title of the first part stands the head of Johann Winckelmann and around that allegories of attributes which excellently demonstrate his antiquarian character [*antiquarischen Charakter*], namely his knowledge of Egyptian, Etruscan, Greek and Roman antiquities.' His scholarly achievement is such that it seems that he came from antiquity itself. Homer's bust on the right signals Winckelmann's love of classical Greek literature, alluding to Anton Raphael Mengs's famous portrait of a handsome young scholar reading the heroic exploits of the *Iliad* (Fig. 2). The sphinx at the back indicates his ability to decipher the complex symbols of ancient art, his capacity to see beyond the obvious, the riddle-solver becoming a potent image for

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Fig. 1. '...allegories of attributes which excellently demonstrate his antiquarian character...' Winckelmann (1776, title page to Part I).

the Enlightenment thinker.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the Roman she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus underlines the great man's professional position at the heart of Rome, the eternal city. Along with the Etruscan vase at the back, the positioning of these objects maps out ancient Mediterranean geography, Egypt in the east, Greece a little nearer, and Rome in the west, and behind it, to the north of that city, Etruria. The ancient world orbits Winckelmann, who is placed at its heart.

<sup>1</sup> On eighteenth-century 'Egyptophilia', see Bernal (1987), and the essays in Seipel (2000); on Winckelmann and Egyptian art and archaeology, see Winckelmann-Gesellschaft (2003); on Oedipal riddle-solving and the Enlightenment, see Leonard (2005).

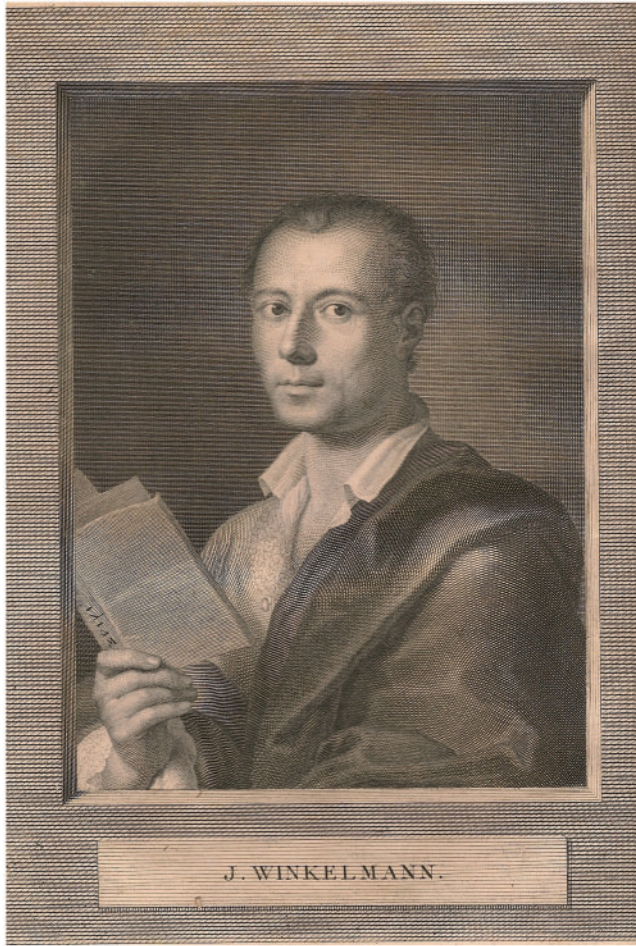


Fig. 2. J.J. Winckelmann (1802 [1793–1803], 1, frontispiece), engraving after portrait by Mengs.

This celebratory image was used repeatedly in subsequent editions, through the rest of the eighteenth century, and in twentieth century German editions of the work.<sup>2</sup> But the early reception of Winckelmann was also characterized by a far more mournful response. Michael Huber translated Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* into French in 1781, and he introduced that work with a 'Life' of its author. When it came to the great man's demise, he wrote that 'the news of [Winckelmann's] death burst through all of Europe and made sensitive souls

<sup>2</sup> The 1934 edition, published by Ludwig Goldschneider, was reprinted in 1972, 1982, and 1993. The most recent (and colossal) German edition, in 2002, presents the 1764 and 1776 editions in parallel. Of course, imagery celebrating Winckelmann also appeared in the nineteenth century: see Sünderhauf (2004).





Fig. 3. 'Crudeli funere extinctum': mourning over Winckelmann's ashes. (Winckelmann, 1802 [1793–1803]: I, cii).

burst into tears.<sup>3</sup> Although this might seem an extreme reaction, Huber's rhetoric was not a unique case of hyperbolic emotionalism (Huber was after all writing in the Age of Sentimentalism, or *Empfindsamkeit*). All the eighteenth-century French and Italian translations of Winckelmann's *Geschichte* (there were three in French and two in Italian<sup>4</sup>) included images of a fictional tomb or ashes of Winckelmann (Figs 3–6), which introduced the main text. The grief that attended Winckelmann's death quite literally prefaced the early reception of his most famous work. (The *Geschichte* was read just as much in translation as it was in the German.<sup>5</sup>) Most engagements with Winckelmann's book between the 1770s and the 1820s (when new *Complete Works* editions appeared) were also a coming-to-terms with his death.

3 Winckelmann (1781: I, cxxxv–vi).

4 Winckelmann (1766, 1779, 1781, 1783–4, 1802). Several different imprints of Winckelmann (1802 [1793–1803]) appeared.

5 Décultot (2000: 77–8).



Fig. 4. Oeser's tomb for Winckelmann (Winckelmann, 1802 [1793–1803]: 2, frontispiece)

In Fig. 3, we can see an antique figure mourning over an urn, presumably meant to contain Winckelmann's ashes, who is 'crudeli funere extinctum', 'cut off by a cruel death'. The Latin alludes to Virgil, *Eclogue* 5.20–1, '**extinctum** Nymphae **crudeli funere** Daphnin / flebant' ('the nymphs cried for Daphnis, cut off by a cruel death'), the opening line of Mopsus' song in Virgil's poem. The nymph who cried over Daphnis' death now laments over Winckelmann's. And the reference to Virgil's line is not insignificant. Daphnis was a shepherd and bucolic poet who wasted away, according to several versions of his tale, because of unrequited love. From a modern perspective, the precise nature of Daphnis' death was mysterious — even ancient sources disagreed about his 'cruel death'.<sup>6</sup> By subtly comparing him to

6 On Virgil *Eclogue* 5, see Lee (1977); on the various stories of Daphnis, see Hunter (1999: 63–8).



Fig. 5. D'Hancarville's tomb for Winckelmann (Hamilton/D'Hancarville 1766–7, 2, frontispiece)

Daphnis, the image obscures the details of Winckelmann's own demise. He is portrayed as a master-poet, inventor of a genre (art-historical writing, just as Daphnis invented bucolic), who wrote in order to create a systematic knowledge of the fragmentary nature of the remains of ancient art (just as Daphnis sang pastoral poetry in an attempt to bring back his love to him, if only in words). Skirting subtly around this image's elegant intertextuality is the issue of the relationship between desire and death. Just as Daphnis died for love, in circumstances now veiled in mystery, so this image veils over the enigmatic reasons for Winckelmann's own end.

Although the details have always remained shadowy, there are some things that can definitely be said about the scholar's death. After several years spent among the antiquities of Rome and Italy, Winckelmann had decided to make a return trip home, but on the way aborted his plans and returned to his beloved Italy. On the way back Winckelmann was murdered in Trieste, his death shocking European literati. It seems that he had befriended another traveller by the name of

Francesco Arcangeli, who killed Winckelmann on 8 June 1768 for medals that Maria Theresa of Austria had given him.<sup>7</sup> His grim murder at the hands of such an individual elicited numerous responses from writers, poets, and philosophers. Very quickly, speculation grew about a possible relationship struck between the petty criminal and the famous art historian. In his eulogy written in 1778, Johann Gottfried Herder delicately suggested that it was Winckelmann's immense longing and warmth for friendship that brought on his death.<sup>8</sup>

For some, the event was simply inexplicable — too horrific to comprehend — whereas others interpreted Winckelmann's murder as tragically fated, it being his destiny to die the way he did. As Lionel Gossman has discussed, Winckelmann's demise epitomized 'the tension between the need to explain and awareness of the unexplainable, between the effort to translate the signs of past reality into present discourse and the effort to save them from translation.'<sup>9</sup> For some, then, Winckelmann became an enigma, a fragmented mosaic of unanswerable questions. Gossman shows that for Herder (in 1778), his death brought up difficult issues: 'Who was Winckelmann? Italian or German? Catholic or Protestant, Ancient or Modern, male or female? Did he find his identity by going to Italy or did he perhaps rather compromise it still further, and was his unexpected and unexplained decision to revisit Germany a tragically unsuccessful effort to resolve his inner divisions?'<sup>10</sup> Whereas for Herder, Winckelmann was incomplete, unfinished, a fragment, Goethe's slightly later engagement emphasizes the classical integrity and completeness of the art historian. Goethe's essay, *The Age of Winckelmann* (1805), argues that he is 'not so much a scholar (the scholarly work will inevitably become obsolete, according to Goethe) as a teacher, a model.'<sup>11</sup> For Goethe, famously, one does not so much as learn from Winckelmann, as one becomes something — or someone — as a result of reading him.<sup>12</sup>

These responses reflect the conflicted nature of Winckelmann's own scholarship — especially as embodied by his *Geschichte*. As Katherine Harloe has examined, on the one hand, the Preface of this work accentuates Winckelmann's 'intention . . . to provide a system [*Lehrgebäude*]', that is to say, 'he is producing a historical narrative that is both *causal* and *complete/continuous*'.<sup>13</sup> He sought to construct a textual monument ('Gebäude') more complete than the ruinous ancient buildings strewn

7 See Gossman (1992) for full details and discussion about how Winckelmann actually died.

8 See *ibid.*, pp. 219–20, for further discussion. Herder's eulogy is reprinted in Johann Herder (1963).

9 Gossman (1992: 236).

10 *Ibid.*, p. 228.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 227.

12 On Goethe's interest in how one's subjectivity can be actively invented and moulded from reading, and from reading Winckelmann in particular, see Gustafson (2002).

13 Winckelmann (2006: 71); Harloe (2009: 101)



across the Mediterranean lands. Winckelmann's *Geschichte* aimed at completeness and (neo-)classicizing integrity as it successfully restored the narrative of ancient art. On the other hand, however, Harloe also shows that his Preface suggests the need to rely on 'conjectures' in the construction of a history of ancient art.<sup>14</sup> Winckelmann's scholarship, then, was also the product of a creative imagination that attempted to fill in the gaps of knowledge.

The text of Winckelmann's *Geschichte* vacillates between a confidence in the ability to excavate and bring to life ancient art for the modern viewer, and a profound anxiety that the history of ancient art might only be as fragmentary as the ancient torsos left for the modern age.<sup>15</sup> When Winckelmann described the Apollo Belvedere, he famously wrote that he felt as if he had been 'transported to Lycian groves in Delos' where he might worship at the feet of the god's statue.<sup>16</sup> Winckelmann's rhetoric of sublime rapture and transportation suggested that one's embodiment was not an obstacle to engaging with ancient art — Winckelmann felt he was time-travelling, absenting himself from his body. But ancient art was not only represented by classical objects of integrity, but also — and mostly — by fragments. Just as alluring as the Apollo was a sculptural fragment, the Belvedere Torso, which Winckelmann stated was Heracles. In contrast to Apollo, contemplation of the fragment cannot bring the viewer beyond the physical: from the beginning of his description, where he personifies the sculpture as 'abused and mutilated to the extreme', to his conclusion, where he emphasizes the object's 'fleshly skin' and its overall 'balanced fleshliness'. Furthermore, Winckelmann underlines the inimitable nature of this relic: 'no one can be sure of accuracy when copying' it, as the modern artist 'will diverge imperceptibly' as he attempts to replicate the 'contours of this body'. There is no sense of time-travelling here when viewing the fragment. This allows Winckelmann a direct comparison with his favourite piece of sculpture: 'Indeed, one could say that this Heracles comes nearer to a higher period of art than even the Apollo.'<sup>17</sup> Winckelmann knowingly attended to the tension at the heart of his *Geschichte*, as he sought to bring together his abstract, theoretical system of art history with the ruinous litter of evidence, causing him to wonder which was the more beautiful: the artwork reflective of a timeless, abstract, truthful classicism, the Apollo, or a fragment which emphasized its embodiedness and historical specificity, its inimitable nature, Heracles' torso?

Between classical completeness and evocative ruin, Winckelmann himself came to be viewed like the *Geschichte* he wrote: he was seen as a timeless, classical figure that transcended the ages, both ancient and modern, *and* as a man always romantically destined to die young. Winckelmann was treated as both immortal and always

<sup>14</sup> Winckelmann (2006: 78) and Harloe (2009: 101).

<sup>15</sup> Potts (1994).

<sup>16</sup> Winckelmann (2006: 334).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.



already dead. Indeed, the Italian and French editions of the *Geschichte* saw Winckelmann's text as a valuable system for elucidating the history of art, but continually incorporated new material in order to amplify the work. The *Geschichte* set out a classical, universal theory for art, but it also became 'a container for an ever-expanding body of evidence . . . [I]t was a text in perpetual transformation that could never achieve definitive form' as Potts observes.<sup>18</sup> And it was precisely Winckelmann's death that was to shape the reception of his writing, the *Geschichte* in particular. His early death caused contemporaries to view Winckelmann as if he were himself part of the classical past. Yet at the same time, his murder literally ensured that his history as he wrote it would always remain unfinished, fragmentary, left for others to complete, or even to contest. On the one hand, his work became an abstraction, a classical system of ideas, timelessly applicable, and Winckelmann himself an antique figure living in the ancient world, a time-traveller, the perfect historian. On the other, however, the *Geschichte* was an incomplete fragment precisely because Winckelmann was a man of flesh and blood, his embodiment highlighted by his ghastly murder, his embodiment figuring his place *within* history, his inability to time-travel to fill in the gaps of the fragmentary nature of ancient art itself. And Figs 1 and 3 nicely bring out the varying responses to Winckelmann, his writing and his death: both a celebrated scholar and a tragic artist, never allowed to complete his work. These two images make two very different suggestions: for some, his appreciation of beauty immortalized him, whereas for others, it spelled out his death.

My article turns in more detail to Figs 4–6, those images of mourning, in order to interrogate how they partake in the complex reception of Winckelmann *through* his death. Although they introduced Winckelmann's readers to his works, conditioning the readers' response, they have received surprisingly little attention.<sup>19</sup> We will see how these acts of mourning seek to remember and revivify Winckelmann and his work for a post-Winckelmann generation — they seek to immortalize him and his scholarly achievements. Yet at the same time, we shall see how they signal the impossibility of that gesture, as they also emphasize the intangibility of Winckelmann, the difficulties of understanding his *Geschichte*, indeed the fragmentariness of his text. These images of mourning both remember Winckelmann *and* suggest his ever-departing status. In our examination of Figs 4–6, we will see that these images knowingly engage with the very final paragraph of Winckelmann's *Geschichte*. In this eloquent conclusion he writes:

Just as a beloved stands on the seashore and follows with tearful eyes her departing sweetheart, with no hope of seeing him again, and believes she can glimpse even in the distant sail

<sup>18</sup> Potts (2006: 15).

<sup>19</sup> The only detailed examination so far can be found in Griener (1998).

the image of her lover – so we, like the lover, have as it were only a shadowy outline of the subject of our desires remaining.<sup>20</sup>

Winckelmann meshes together the tensions informing the *Geschichte*: the art historian is both hopelessly nostalgic and realistically without hope of any possibility that a full and complete history of ancient art could be written. The return to ancient art, or the return of ancient art, the reuniting of lover and beloved, of modernity and antiquity, into a coherent, continuous narrative, became a preoccupation for Winckelmann's readers. These images meditate upon the (in)ability of Winckelmann to time-travel and write that history. In their ruminations on memorializing Winckelmann, these images cause their readers to ruminate on Winckelmann's own attempts to memorialize antiquity.

It is important to remember that these engravings appeared in the Italian and French translations of Winckelmann's work, which sought to cement and solidify his porous text. The manuscript that he was working on when he died and that formed the basis of the 1776 edition is now lost, so we have no idea whether the changes made were Winckelmann's own or his editors.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, this edition did not stabilize Winckelmann's meaning but itself produced numerous commentaries and versions, including the French and Italian editions which sought to improve upon Winckelmann's German.<sup>22</sup> It is high time, then, that we turn to consider these images which prefaced the reading of Winckelmann's most significant oeuvre. Winckelmann's text sought to teach its readers how to see images, and so the various strategies of illustrating Winckelmann's texts demand close attention. And just as different French and Italian editors and translators competed to access the great master's ideas, so the acts of mourning for Winckelmann reflected upon the possibilities of positioning oneself as (intellectual) heir, of controlling Winckelmann's meaning and legacy.

### The tombs of Winckelmann

In the wake of Winckelmann's death, some contemporary readers worried that Winckelmann's German did not adequately express the full beauty of his ideas. Winckelmann himself felt that it was primarily in French that he could really express himself: he was still dreaming of a French translation of his *Geschichte* months before his death. He had also entrusted Henry Fuseli with the task of putting his work into English, which was also designed to be an improvement on the original 1764 text.<sup>23</sup> Christian Garve the philosopher, and friend and adviser to Michael

20 Winckelmann (2006: 351). On his conclusion, see: Potts (1991); Davis (1994: 141–59); and, more recently, Harloe (2009: 105–6).

21 See Vout (2006: 159). It is hardly surprising, then, that the title page of the 1776 edition should have emphasized that the *Geschichte* was 'Johann Joachim Winkelmanns' [sic, with my italics].

22 See Griener (1998: 53); and Vout's concluding comments (2006: 160).

23 Griener (1998: 29–31).

Huber, who in 1781 published the first official French translation, commented that the German language was unable to see ideal beauty.<sup>24</sup> The worrying consequence was that Winckelmann's achievement might not be understood correctly and remembered. Pascal Griener has commented upon the engravings that introduce Winckelmann's work. He observes how Adam Friedrich Oeser's drawing (engraved by Christian Gottlieb Geyser, first appearing in Huber's 1781 edition, and reproduced in other Italian and French editions) responds to the concerns around the expressiveness of Winckelmann in German and in French (Fig. 4). Oeser, himself a good friend of Winckelmann, depicts an obscured face of the sun at the centre of his image, which refers back to the iconography of Louis XIV, whose omniscient power and wisdom was deemed to be blinding and had, therefore, to remain covered up. By the 1770s and 1780s, it was understood that the sublime could not be truly seen. It could only be grasped as such when veiled. The sun, as Griener discusses, represents the immediate reception of Winckelmann's writing that treated his work as blinding sublimity which required translating to enable clearer understanding.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, these early translators were deeply pre-occupied with making visible what was invisible in Winckelmann's original German — that is the clarification of Winckelmann's lofty ideas. Ironically, this meant that these translators treated Winckelmann's writing just as Winckelmann himself treated the viewing of sublime ancient art, in that his aim was to render visible to the (mind's) eye the invisible intellectuality of the art's meaning.<sup>26</sup>

This image became a favourite with subsequent translators. It was included in Carlo Fea's Italian edition and one of the issues of Hendrik Jansen's French translation (see Appendix 1 for dates and details of their editions). Interestingly, this rich and strange image is also interpreted for the reader by Huber himself in his 'Explication des vignettes et cul-de-lampes' at the end of his rendering of Winckelmann's text. For Huber, Destiny, who is represented by one of the *Parcae*, refers to the murder of Winckelmann at the knife of Francesco Arcangeli. As he notes, 'the Empress-Queen [Marie-Therese] had pardoned Arcangeli who had been condemned to death, and had also presented Winckelmann with some golden medals'. 'We also know', continues Huber, 'that Arcangeli murdered Winckelmann in order to steal these very medals from him'. Huber suggests, then, that had it not been for the 'virtues' of the queen, that is her 'clemency and munificence', Winckelmann would not have died (yet). Without her clemency, Arcangeli would not have been freed to murder and without her munificence Winckelmann would have had nothing for which he could be killed.<sup>27</sup> For the translator, the image encapsulates the proverb 'l'homme propose et Dieu dispose'.<sup>28</sup>

24 Ibid., p. 53. On Garve, see van Dusen (1970).

25 Griener (1998: 40–1).

26 Ibid., p. 52.

27 Winckelmann (1781: 3:287).

28 Ibid.

The veiling of the omniscient solar eye of the monarch, then, comes to signify the blindness of everyone *including* the monarch. Although it was rumoured that Winckelmann had befriended the younger man for sex, Huber's rationalization of the image avoids any such explanation.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the ghostly face at the centre of the picture mediates and negotiates a set of contrasts across the image. This spectral visage seems to hover between life and death, presence and absence, visibility and invisibility. Only a few of the sun's rays are visible: is the drapery in the process of revealing or concealing the face? Will Huber's translation illuminate or obfuscate Winckelmann's ideas? In the top right corner and the far right side of the picture, trees with luxuriant foliage fill up the background, suggesting abundance, nature, vitality, and animation. This is contrasted, diagonally opposite in the bottom left corner, with the mutilated torso and head, the leaves cut from their source and the old book (dead wood) implying lack, mortality, and inanimate representation. The sun's face is situated between these two extremes. (Conversely, the overgrowth of the tree might instead suggest decay and dilapidation, whereas the book would imply memorialization, life after death.) Indeed, the figure of Destiny herself, who presides over a human's lifespan, is a *copy* of a statue found in Pompeii. Destiny is figured here as a monumental sculptor putting the finishing touches to the memorializing image of Winckelmann's tomb. As the drapery divides the image of the sun with its rays in two, so this is reflected in the picture's leitmotif of cutting. In the bottom right corner lies Destiny's 'spindle and a ball of thread whose weft has been cut', as Huber says. If Winckelmann had been cut down in his prime, stabbed as he was by Arcangeli's knife (Destiny's stylus looks pretty threatening), the head, torso, and leaves on the plinth brutally reinforce the extinction of Winckelmann's life. Destiny's severed thread in the bottom right corner mirrors the leaves at the top left, which garland the (expressionless, mute, dead, even unreadable) representation of Winckelmann's head (itself sundered from any body), leaves disbranched as they have been from their arboreal source. And right above this crown, the name 'Winckelmann' itself has been snipped off by the very edge of the picture.

The image expresses most potently the tension between concrete materiality and aestheticizing abstraction. The engraving and its explanation symbolically recall that Winckelmann's rendezvous with the worryingly named Arcangeli provoked much anxiety for Winckelmann's contemporary readers. Huber's 'Life' avoided discussing the rumours that Winckelmann had some sort of sexual relationship with the younger man. His explanation of Oeser's drawing tries to suggest that whatever our human actions, our destiny (as represented by the figure Destiny) is already planned out for us. In Huber's interpretation, it is Destiny rather than Arcangeli that ended Winckelmann's life. But the engraving does nevertheless highlight the

29 On this theory about Winckelmann's befriending of Arcangeli, see Gossman (1992: 218–20), who suggests that as early as 1778 in his eulogy, Herder hints at the rumour.



possible eroticism of that fatal encounter. The relic of the torso at the bottom of the image in its physical muscularity contrasts with the image of Winckelmann's head, a picture of classicizing cerebral serenity, at the image's very head. The viewer is provoked into thinking about the relationship between Winckelmann's aesthetic writings and his actual physical desires. Interestingly, then, the image does not present the viewer with a complete, integral picture of Winckelmann — rather a *disjunction* between aesthetic intellect at the top and sensual physicality at the bottom. Winckelmann's self, represented as body parts, is split between these two representations for his reader.

The relic of a classical torso also recalls the fact that Winckelmann never finished the *Geschichte* to his satisfaction. He was always revising his work, always anxious that it was obsolete the moment it was written.<sup>30</sup> The torso also, then, can be seen to represent Winckelmann's own work, which itself mourned for the beautiful but incomplete bodies that we have received from antiquity. This masculine torso in the engraving knowingly reflects upon the very final paragraph of Winckelmann's *Geschichte*, in which Winckelmann as art historian compares himself to a beloved waiting on the shore for her hero as he disappears in his boat. Ancient art is the hero and the female beloved is Winckelmann 'himself'.<sup>31</sup> Winckelmann's metaphor for modernity's struggle to touch and engage with the antiquity of male beauty feminizes the art historian. The torso at the bottom of Oeser's drawing refers, then, to Winckelmann's desire for the ancient male aesthetic on more than one level. Oeser's drawing offers the viewer quite a different interpretation from that of Huber: it was not simply fate that cut off Winckelmann's life, but it was also his desire for the male form that disabled Winckelmann to complete his historical account of the ancient aesthetic male body. If Winckelmann's work is so difficult to read, as the image tells us, it is because Winckelmann's ideas were cut off before they could have been voiced. Oeser's drawing reveals a troubling tension for Winckelmann's early readers: if it was his interest in the male form that makes his work worth reading and remembering, it is also this interest in the male form that precludes and questions the possibility of recovering what is to be remembered, since it was that very interest that killed the art historian and leaves his work in its incomplete state. The reader of Oeser's drawing views Winckelmann *across* the classicizing, intellectual profile at the top, and the erotic fragment at the bottom. His abstract and aestheticizing scholarship is praised and immortalized, yet at the same time its material, unfinished nature is emphasized, as Destiny shows herself all too keen to finish off Winckelmann's monument — to finish off Winckelmann himself before he was able to complete his own monumental *Geschichte*.

30 Griener (1995: 115).

31 Winckelmann (2006: 351).

### Winckelmann's cenotaph

This image seems to equivocate over its capabilities to mourn (and thereby remember) the life and work of Winckelmann. Another imaginative image of Winckelmann's tomb (Fig. 5), which had appeared not long after his death, was the frontispiece to the second volume of the *Collection of Etruscan, Greek and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of the hon.ble Wm Hamilton*, also known by its French title *Antiquités étrusques, grecques et romaines, Tirées du cabinet de M. Hamilton*. This huge work, more affectionately called at the time *Hamilton's Etruscan Vases*, was published in four large folios that were dated 1766–7, but in reality appeared between 1767 and 1776. Sir William Hamilton was the British Ambassador to the Two Sicilies, and as such based in Naples, between 1764 and 1800.<sup>32</sup> While living there, he became a prodigious collector of Etruscan vases and other antiquities, the collection he had published at huge expense. He employed an itinerant scholar, Pierre François Hugues, who went by the name of Baron d'Hancarville, to organize the publication. Born to an impoverished cloth merchant in Nancy on 1 January 1729, he passed through life, assuming innumerable aliases and identities. Winckelmann aptly named him an 'Avanturier' and vacillated between admiration and suspicion for this questionable personality.<sup>33</sup> In one letter, he warns a friend to be wary of him: '[w]hen you show him your gems keep a very close look-out to see what he is doing with his hands'.<sup>34</sup> On the other hand, Winckelmann obviously respected d'Hancarville's intellectual abilities, as he had him installed as librarian to Cardinal Albani.<sup>35</sup> A child prodigy, an army officer, a scholarly entertainer (or entertaining scholar) in the circles of many a *philosophe* as well as at royal courts, a conspirator in imperial plots across Europe and a pornographer — the canvas of d'Hancarville's life was nothing if not colourful. In the 1760s, he found himself resident at Naples, where he managed to convince Hamilton that he was the man who could publish an edition of the ambassador's collection. Over a period of ten years, between 1767 and 1776, costing Hamilton tens of thousands of pounds, four sumptuous elephantine folios appeared containing over five hundred plates of vase paintings in terracotta and black enhanced with other colours. 'Consumed by encyclopaedic fever',<sup>36</sup> d'Hancarville's publication sought to compete with the great antiquarian productions of the eighteenth century: he served up a series of extravagant and provocative essays not only on Hamilton's collection but also on art history in general. It was a groundbreaking production: the first colour-plate book on the history of art in a standard edition of several hundred copies.<sup>37</sup>

32 On Hamilton, see Constantine (2002).

33 Winckelmann (1952–57: III, 38, 317, 366).

34 Ibid., p. 2:31; and see Haskell (1987: 32–33).

35 See Moore (2008: 148).

36 Griener (1992: 50).

37 Ramage (1987); Lissarrague and Reed (1997).

Turning to Fig. 5, d'Hancarville is keen to present himself as 'the best of friends' ('AMIC.KARISS.') with the dearly departed Winckelmann. Indeed, in the same volume as this frontispiece appears, d'Hancarville makes a reference to his 'friend'. During the explication of one vase painting, d'Hancarville writes:

At this very moment I have just re-found a letter that Mr. Winckelmann wrote to me from Rome just before his tragic death, a death I regret along with all the lovers of antiquity.<sup>38</sup>

In regretting Winckelmann's death like 'all lovers of antiquity', d'Hancarville wittily suggests that Winckelmann himself was from the ancient world. At the same time, however, his voice lives on in d'Hancarville's publication. The Frenchman thinks he sees Cassandra predicting the fall of Troy in the vase painting he discusses, but then paraphrases and quotes Winckelmann's view verbatim that Heracles' enslavement to Omphale is what is represented. Winckelmann survives beyond the grave. And this does seem to be Winckelmann's work as this explanation is also included in the revised version of the *Geschichte* which was published posthumously, in 1776.<sup>39</sup> This image publicly announces d'Hancarville's closeness to Winckelmann, exalting the former's intellectual project through association with Winckelmann's.

D'Hancarville's sorrows were not, however, straightforward. His admiration was also critical. As James Moore observes, 'd'Hancarville aspired to rival Winckelmann by providing a prehistory of art and civilisation, exploring the fundamental origins on which Winckelmann's theories were grounded.'<sup>40</sup> Winckelmann, according to d'Hancarville, by concentrating on art's highest points, omitted to consider several early periods of artistic development.<sup>41</sup> The unfinished nature of Winckelmann's history (as d'Hancarville saw it) is hinted at by the figure (an artistic portrayal of the Frenchman), bent over, humbled, yet holding a manuscript, unrolled, implying the fragmentary nature of the Winckelmannian oeuvre. Indeed in the remark just quoted, the French scholar immodestly suggests that it was *his* work Winckelmann was thinking about and not the *Geschichte*, at what turned out to be the end of his life: "'Winckelmann" wrote to me from Rome *just before his death*' (italics added). D'Hancarville sought to inherit Winckelmann's intellectual legacy by excavating the history of art in the periods *previous* to those Winckelmann had disinterred. Even though his work was coming after Winckelmann's, d'Hancarville sought to come before, to analyse precisely what made the famous *Geschichte* possible.

The viewer of d'Hancarville's image is invited to collude in the fiction of discovering Winckelmann's (by now) ancient tomb, whose walls are lined with

38 Hamilton/[Hugues] d' Hancarville (1766–67 [1767–76]: II, 164).

39 See Winckelmann (1965: IV, 258–61). Or at least the 1776 editors took it as such when they included it. Whether it was from Winckelmann's (now lost) notes, or it came straight from d'Hancarville's text, we cannot know.

40 Moore (2008: 139).

41 See Hamilton/[Hugues] d' Hancarville (1766–67 [1767–76]: IV: iii, v, 97).

columbarium niches used by ancient Romans for the safekeeping of cinerary urns. The sarcophagus (which is comparable to late second/early third century CE examples) is carved with strigillated decoration and ornamented with lion-head handles, which frame a valedictory inscription.<sup>42</sup> Although the inscription is legible, the language is certainly not entirely straightforward. Opening with the standard 'D[is] M[anibus]', 'to the departed spirits', (continuing with) 'for Johann Win[c]kelmann, the best man, the dearest friend', ('IOAN.WINKELMANN .VIR.OPT.AMIC.KARISS'), it goes on, 'Pierre d'Hancarville, in grief, has made [this monument]' ('PET. DHANCARVILLE. DOLENS FECIT'). The inscription ends with the very unusual language (for an inscription at least) 'ORCO. PEREGRINO', which we can for now translate, 'he died far from home', referring to the fact that Winckelmann died in Trieste.

On first glance it would appear that the final line 'ORCO PEREGRINO' literally means 'in a foreign underworld' or 'when D/death was abroad'. But what is the source for this unusual inscription? The classical encyclopaedia Pauly-Wissowa (vol. XVIII.1, col.920) cites the following Roman inscription (no. *CIL* X 3003), an epitaph that appeared in Naples and seems to have entered epigraphic collections by the early sixteenth century:

D. M.  
TERTIO.FRATRI  
SOROR.BENE.MERENTI.FECIT  
VIXIT.ANNIS.PLVS.MINVS.XXXI  
ORCO.PEREGRINO

The peculiar language also appears here, again at the end of the inscription. It seems certain that d'Hancarville knew about this text since elsewhere in his publication he makes use of some of the other phrases in this inscription (in the image attending the Preface to Volume III). Pauly-Wissowa's interpretation suggests that the phrase refers both to the god of the Underworld and to Tertius' grave. 'Orco peregrino', then, signifies both that Death had overtaken Tertius in foreign parts and that he lies buried in a foreign place. That is to say, *the text marks a cenotaph*. On this reading, the inscription means: 'To the spirits of the departed. His sister has made [this monument] for her well deserving brother Tertius. He lived about 31 years. He died and is buried abroad'.<sup>43</sup>

This text had already appeared in some of the great epigraphic collections of seventeenth-century antiquarians, and the strange coda 'ORCO.PEREGRINO'

42 Sarcophagi: Koch and Sichtermann (1982: 75, 242); and Calza (1977: p. 231, no.272, plate 150); eighteenth-century columbaria: de Polignac (1993).

43 Pauly-Wissowa XVIII 1 col.920. This also explains 'plus minus': as Tertius went missing abroad, his family would not have known his exact age at death. 'Plus minus' is a formula from Christian epitaphs, making the inscription roughly datable to the fourth century CE or later.



provoked disagreement. For one scholar it meant that the dead man was buried in a grave of another family, whereas for another it suggested that the dead man could be found in a non-citizen's grave.<sup>44</sup> Whatever the precise meaning of this difficult phrase, it seems to suggest that the tomb it marks is empty — the body of the deceased is not there. Indeed the absence of Winckelmann can be seen as suggestive of the tensions in memorialising him. The cenotaph implies he is literally difficult to locate, hard to pin down, intangible, out of the reader's grasp. The image opens up similar tensions as those investigated in Oeser's drawing, those tensions between concrete materiality and abstract aestheticism. The materiality of the stone contrasts with the absence of Winckelmann's body, echoed in the empty niches around the tomb: the doves have long gone. The image confronts the viewer with the question, how was Winckelmann to be remembered and memorialized? As someone who was once a living human being, flesh and blood, or as an abstract idea? Who or what was being remembered here? What place was Winckelmann's body to play in his memorialization? We saw with Oeser's drawing that there was a tension between remembering Winckelmann as an abstract thinker whose intellect was able to piece together the history of classical art, and Winckelmann as an embodied individual whose mysterious death in Trieste left his *Geschichte* as a mere fragment, a torso of what it could have been. Similarly, with the cenotaph engraving, we are left to meditate upon the significance of the body itself for the construction of the history of art: does it matter that Winckelmann, the physical, embodied individual, died when and how he did? Is his *Geschichte* a 'Lehrgebäude' or an incomplete product? Furthermore, this image's absencing of Winckelmann's body reflects upon Winckelmann's own comments about his disembodied status when he time-travels back to Delos to worship Apollo, and his conflicting emphasis on the beauty of the 'fleshly' Heracles torso. The place of the body — the art historian's body and the body of sculpture — in his theory of art caused Winckelmann concern, as this image explores.

Like Oeser's drawing, this earlier image also meditates upon the final paragraph of the *Geschichte*. As discussed earlier, Winckelmann compares himself and the losses of ancient art to a beloved watching her loved one as he sails from the shores of his homeland. In response to this mournful description that concludes Winckelmann's *Geschichte*, d'Hancarville's image neatly inverts this comparison. The German antiquarian, who died abroad and who, therefore, was never destined to return home, is more like the hero/artwork leaving the shores than the beloved awaiting his/their return. Just like the hero, whose outline against the canvas of the sails can only be vaguely seen by his beloved on the shore, so the memory of Winckelmann, in a continual state of being mourned by d'Hancarville (with inscribed paper, an

<sup>44</sup> See: Boxborn (1694–9); and Burman (1743: 196, on *Sat.* 34. 10). For this latter scholar, it is only the phrase 'LOCO PEREGRINO' which can signify that the person 'had died in a foreign place'. In his nineteenth-century work, Orelli (1828: 2:4520) also thinks that the text marks a cenotaph.

unreadable work of history in hand), oscillates between clarity and obscurity, presence and absence. Winckelmann and his text are themselves fragmentary just like the history of art he tried to reconstruct. It required augmentation and completion — it required the work of a scholar such as d'Hancarville. Just as the image mourns the loss of Winckelmann's body, so the presence of the mourning man equates embodiment itself with loss.

### Nachleben for the *Geschichte*?

D'Hancarville's project was not as successful as he had intended, however. James Moore has most recently commented that d'Hancarville 'is something of an embarrassment to modern scholarship' — especially historians and archaeologists of classical art. He notes that his works were 'badly organized, highly complex and inaccessible', continuing that 'he was also something of a lone wolf, operating independently outside the established academies of England, Italy and France...'<sup>45</sup> This is certainly true: Ian Jenkins complains of d'Hancarville's text accompanying Hamilton's vase collection that his prose 'drift[s] on a sea of words. Ideas pour forth in fits and starts, spilling over from one chapter into another... [his] art history... is not so much to be read by his audience, as inferred or reconstructed, almost from the "ruins" of his own text.'<sup>46</sup> Rather than writing a more complete and systematic history of art, his text is far more fragmentary than Winckelmann's could ever be perceived to be. Furthermore, the life of d'Hancarville the 'Avanturier' was always precarious. Sometime early in the 1770s, he was ejected from Naples for producing pornographic images. He took much of the material for the Hamilton publication with him, forcing the ambassador to continue working with the renegade scholar.

By the 1780s, however, d'Hancarville had re-established himself and his reputation, and found himself patronized by Charles Townley, one of England's most prolific collectors of antiquities. He was still publishing erotic material, but also printed a second (quarto) edition of Hamilton's vase collection as well as another a new, large work on symbolism in art.<sup>47</sup> His work, then, acquired respect in antiquarian circles, and so it is not surprising to see his mournful engraving being used in Carlo Fea's Italian and Hendrik Jansen's French editions of Winckelmann's *Geschichte* (Fig. 6). If we turn to consider Jansen's use of d'Hancarville here, we can note that in his comments on Jansen, a Dutch translator who later settled in Paris (1741–1812), Pascal Griener has observed that the two missing paving stones in d'Hancarville's image have been filled.<sup>48</sup> The replacement of the stones, suggests Griener, implies that d'Hancarville's emphasis on Winckelmann's absence has been reverted. Jansen seeks to underline that his translation manages to bring

45 Moore (2008: 166).

46 Jenkins and Sloan (1996: 46); see also, Haskell (1987: 320–3).

47 On Townley, see Vaughan (1988); and now Coltman (2009); on d'Hancarville's output in the 1780s, see Moore (2008: 154–7).

48 Griener (1998: 18).

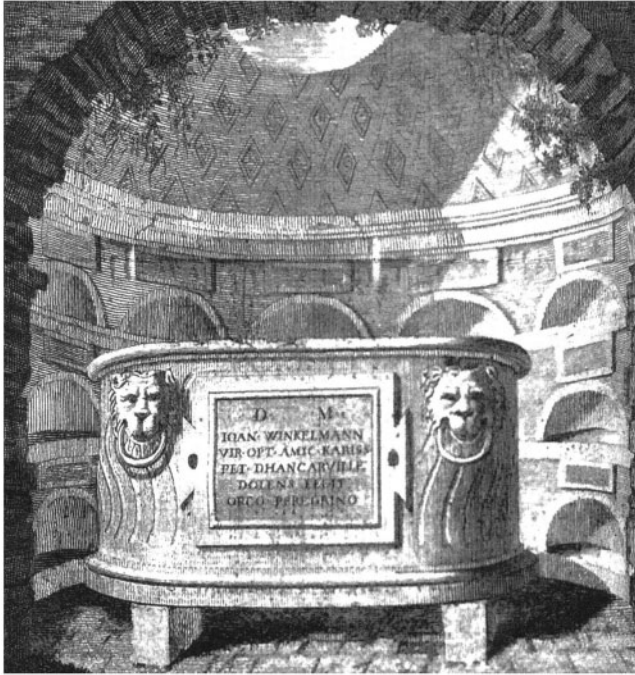


Fig. 6. Tomb for Winckelmann: Winckelmann (1802 [1793–1803], 1, lxxxii)

Winckelmann's text back to life. Indeed, from this point of view, d'Hancarville's version is indeed more dilapidated. There is a crack through the top of the inscription; the supports of the tomb are wearing away; the decoration on the cupola ceiling has broken off in places. The removal of the mournful figure of d'Hancarville himself also reflects Jansen's project to stabilize the meaning of Winckelmann's texts. The unrolled, unreadable manuscript is now nowhere to be seen. Instead, Jansen's edition of Winckelmann translated not only the 1776 text, but also collated the voluminous commentary and addenda that the original *Geschichte* had provoked. To be the first instalment of an edition of all of Winckelmann's works, Jansen attempted to produce a unified theory of art, thereby combining into one whole the excess of texts which confronted the enlightened reader with a sea of theories on art and beauty by the end of the eighteenth century. His deliberate inclusion of several appended essays on the main text saw to it that the *Geschichte* came to be studied with as much attention to detail as the ancient sculptures Winckelmann wrote about. Just as Winckelmann himself had collated together the litter of ancient fragments into a systematic history, so Jansen set about bringing together the mosaic of theories produced as a result of Winckelmann's work, in order to set up a general statement about art.<sup>49</sup>

49 See Griener (1995).

Jansen's edition was among the most ambitious to control and regulate the meaning and legacy of Winckelmann's work. And he was partially successful: his was the edition to which many subsequent scholars turned even if they could read German. It received the praise of Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy, and Friedrich Schlegel chose to use it when he gave his famous lectures on aesthetics in Paris in 1803.<sup>50</sup> Finally, it was Jansen, who successfully installed himself under the revolutionary powers that brought Winckelmann to a wider French readership, which intensely admired the democratic freedom of the Greeks, as espoused by Winckelmann. The words of the German historian were not simply brought back to life but were rigorously appropriated by some of the French democrats. Winckelmann's comments about the moral liberty of Athens became highly politicized.<sup>51</sup> But even Jansen could not complete what he had started: his edition is but a fragment of Winckelmann's entire works. His translation of the *Geschichte* with appendices alone took ten years to appear (between 1793/94 and 1803) appearing in several different imprints. Despite filling in the paving stones, and removing d'Hancarville from the scene, Winckelmann's tomb in Jansen's adaption remained empty. The disputes about the meaning of Winckelmann's text would continue and garner yet further commentary at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Indeed, the ideologues of the 1790s were profoundly divided about the significance of ancient politics for modern French government. And it was Winckelmann's own comments about the imitability of ancient art that helped frame these polarizing debates.<sup>52</sup>

How to mourn Winckelmann — how to remember him — was still deemed an urgent enough issue in the 1820s when Domenico de Rossetti, lawyer, politician and arts patron in Trieste, produced a volume entitled *Il Sepolcro di Winckelmann di Trieste* (1823). Already in 1818 he had published an account of Winckelmann's last week along with transcriptions from the trial of Arcangeli. In *Il Sepolcro*, Rossetti gathered together all the material he could find about Winckelmann's death. The publication was supposed to raise money by subscription to erect a new tomb for Winckelmann in Trieste. Rossetti's dreams were, however, never realized, and the numerous designs for mausolea that decorate his text become a textual monument for what never stood in stone. Understanding the achievement of Winckelmann, and the role his death played in understanding him, would continue to fascinate scholars and writers throughout the nineteenth century and beyond. Winckelmann's work had a great impact on the shape of classical research from the 1780s onwards, and this was partly because he reorganized the way ancient material culture should be viewed. He offered scholars and intellectuals the tools with which to evaluate (ancient) beauty. The images that illustrated Winckelmann's texts, then, played a huge role in transmitting Winckelmann's message. And these images of mourning

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 126

<sup>51</sup> See Pommier (1991); and Hartog (2005: 97–124).

<sup>52</sup> Hartog (2005: 100).



engaged with fundamental aspects of Winckelmann's own meditations about the possibilities of writing a history of art.

### Acknowledgements

The author would like to first thank Prof. Michael Reeve for his epigraphic expertise, and second the anonymous readers for their invaluable advice.

### Appendix 1

Editions of mournful *Geschichte der Kunst der Alterthums*

1776

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Geschichte der Kunst der Alterthums. Nach dem Tode des Verfassers hrsg. und dem Fürsten Wenzel von Kaunitz-Rietberg gewidmet von der kaiserlichen königlichen Akademie der bildenden Künste. Erster und Zweyter Theil*. Wien (Fig. 1).

1779

Giovanni Winkelmann, *Storia delle arti del disegno presso gli antichi di Giovanni Winkelmann. Tradotta dal Tedesco con note originali degli editori*, ed. Carlo Amoretti, Angelo Fumagalli. Tomo 1–2, Milano (Figs 3 and 6).

1781

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'art de l'antiquité par M. Winckelmann. Traduite de l'allemand par M. Huber, I–III*, Leipzig (Fig. 4).

1783–4

Giovanni Winkelmann, *Storia delle arti del disegno presso gli antichi. Tradotta dal Tedesco e in questa edizione corretta e aumentata dall'abate Carlo Fea, 1–3*. Roma (Figs 3, 4, and 6).

1802 [1793–1803]

Johann Joachim Winckelmann, *Histoire de l'art chez les anciens. Traduit de l'allemand. Avec des notes historique et critique de différens auteurs, e. H. J. Jansen*. Paris. (Figs 3, 4, and 6).

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